

Mead and Phillips up for transfer in big upheaval

KEITH MEAD and Alan Phillips, two of the names synonymous with Wycombe Wanderers' success of the seventies, have been placed on the transfer list by manager Andy Williams in a major upheaval at Loakes Park.

Not only will this famous defensive pairing be missing at the start of the next season but leading striker Stewart Atkins will be also. Atkins has just signed for Southern League side Dunstable at a fee of £1,500.

The departure of Mead and Phillips, allied to the temporary retirement of Bobby Davies last month, means the complete break-up of a defence that has been second to none in the Isthmian League during the past four years. Only Paul Birdseye of the back four is now left.

With Dylan Evans also on the transfer list, it is the end

of an era — and a very successful one at that — at Loakes Park. Les Reed, who was on contract, is another not to have been retained.

Mr Williams says he will be able to replace all the people that are leaving as he has six potential new signings, whom he will not name until the formalities are completed. But they are believed to be a centre-half, a left-back, a midfield player and three forwards.

Drastic changes

He explained the departure of Mead and Phillips by saying: "The balance of the side has not been right, and we needed to make some dramatic tactical changes. We finished sixth last season and with the same players could have finished sixth again.

"I didn't want to settle for that and so felt I had to make changes for next season. Both Keith and Alan have done Wycombe proud and they will be doing others proud."

Mead was particularly disappointed about leaving. He said:

**Story by
MICHAEL KNOX**

"I can't say I'm very pleased about it. I am extremely sorry and surprised that both of us are going."

"The club has been fantastic time both on and off the field and made lots of friends. That's why I wanted to finish my football career there in a couple of years."

"I'll have to wait and see what comes along. But I'd like to take this opportunity of thanking all the fans."

Mead, 33, joined Wycombe in January 1974 as an England amateur international, and was a highly consistent centre-back who gave 100 per cent every game, whether the opponents were Middlesbrough or Chalfont St Peter.

There were signs at the start of the season that his age was catching up with him, but his determination saw him again regain his place in the side and he was solidly perenniated at the end of the term. However, the

performance of Steve Hardwick

now means he is surplus to requirements.

Surprising

The departure of Phillips is more surprising. Until he went away on business at the end of the season he was the most consistent centre-half, whose clumsiness was not often pretty, but was highly effective.

Phillips, a Welsh international, came to Loakes Park in August 1974 and was alongside Mead in those epic encounters with Middlesbrough. However, he moved to the side with Hendon at the end of the season when John Delaney returned.

However, with 12 months he was back to resume his position at the heart of the defence. He was not always popular with the fans, who often gave away too many free kicks in dangerous positions, but his wholehearted commitment could not be doubted, and his ability in the air was second to none. His successor will have much to live up to.

The departure of Atkins came out of the blue as he had not been transfer-listed. But Dun-

stable were so determined to obtain his services that they were prepared to pay £1,500.

As this was £1,000 more than the Blues paid Chesham for him, they found it an offer they could not refuse and released him.

Atkins started last season brilliantly with a hat-trick against Hereford, but a hamstring injury suffered during that game, reduced his effectiveness thereafter, although he scored some great opportunist goals. His header against Blyth will long be remembered.

These departures will certainly give the sides a new look this season, but it remains to be seen whether these changes have been for the good.

Blues dance

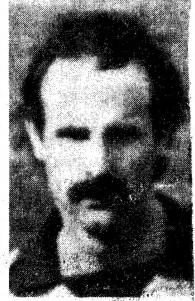
WYCOMBE Wanderers are staging their annual dinner dance at the Excelior Hotel, Heathrow Airport, on Friday, June 22. All those wanting tickets (£7.50 each) should contact secretary John Goldsworthy, 35 West Drive, Totteridge, High Wycombe (Tel. H.W. 38042), or treasurer Gerald Cox, 1 Kelvin Close, High Wycombe.



ALAN PHILLIPS ... a stalwart centre-half.



STEWART ATKINS
... to Dunstable



KEITH MEAD
... surprised